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February 18, 2020

*Via ECF*

The Honorable P. Kevin Castel  
United States District Judge  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street, Courtroom 11D  
New York, NY 10007-1312

Re: *SEC v. Villena, et al.*  
No. 18-cv-04309-PKC

Dear Judge Castel:

On behalf of defendant James B. Panther, Jr., I write to respectfully request that the Court waive his appearance at the pretrial conference, presently scheduled for February 24, 2020 at 12:30 p.m. We have spoken to counsel for the Securities and Exchange Commission regarding this request, who has no objection.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/ BRG

Bradley R. Gershel